

"In Here" not "Out There"

About a year back, we launched a new program at the MIT Club of Northern California titled: Exploring the Mind of the Leader, anchored by Prof. Michael Ray of Stanford Graduate School of Business. In that series, Prof. Ray interviewed some well-known leaders like John Morgridge, Chairman of Cisco and Carol Bartz, CEO of Autodesk. The goal was to collect nuggets on Leadership Development.

Prof. Ray is a very interesting character. He teaches a famous course at Stanford called "Creativity in Business" and has a book by the same name. One of his fundamental thesis on creativity and leadership is succinctly characterized by Bill Carter as "Let go and Let God". My friend Scott Globus and I spent a lot of time researching and getting to know Michael, and concluded that he was our man, because he had something to say which both Scott and I fundamentally agreed with: Serenity is a greater source of creativity than rampant motion. Such motion, we believe, generates only Brownian Motion, ie. Motion without Energy.

This morning, Bill wrote me an email at 6:00 AM: "In the West we have come to lack a sense of mystery partly because everything interesting is supposed to be out there rather than in here, and partly because we in the United States lack a sense of history infecting every moment which is there in Europe and Asia (and probably Latin America about which I know very little). This is the personal and collective depth dimension lacking in Silicon Valley, for instance." I invite you to read Bill's full email:

Hi Sramana

I looked at your website, as did Ulla. It is terrific, and very "you" in its freelance inspired style. Probably something appropriate will come to me to write for it. Meanwhile, here are my thoughts which emerged when looking at Dominique's picture of the people in the fog in Varanasi, which I was pleased to see on your site. I thought of the fact that the Upanishads, arguably the oldest text we have, depicted a time of consciousness emerging out of the unconscious. The ultimate primal creative moment. "Thou are that", the repeated mantra, identified the atman (soul) with god in the water, earth, air, fire, etc. In the West we have come to lack a sense of mystery partly because everything interesting is supposed to be "out there" rather than "in here", and partly because we in the United States lack a sense of history infecting every moment which is there in Europe and Asia (and probably Latin America about which I know very little). This is the personal and collective depth dimension lacking in Silicon Valley, for instance. I am glad you are applying Tagore to your experiences here -- this is the needed corrective.

As you know I have had the instinct to want to illustrate the Upanishads in book form, but have not seen the images in my collection to use for that (yet). Anyway, that image of Dominique's could be an iconic one for that moment in the mists of pre-history when already realized beings were beginning to leave their profound realizations of fundamental truth for others to recognize and probe again for the trillionth time. In our hyperconscious world we need to reconnect with the unconscious, mysterious sources of our knowledge and creativity. Hinduism gave us the big bang theory (form descending out of the formless Brahman which that picture also expresses) with the intuition that in the Upanishadic mode of understanding the origins of the universe are also within us.

Now it is nearly 6 AM. No wonder the main meditation times in India begin at pre-dawn and end with the sun rising: another expression of the same theme.

Bill

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About the Author

Silicon Valley Entrepreneur and Strategy Consultant Sramana Mitra writes about Entrepreneurship, Business Strategy, Emerging Technology, Market Moves, and sundry other topics in her Blog "Sramana Mitra on Strategy". Read more of her writings at <http://www.sramanamitra.com>.